

AMERICA'S PHYSICIAN GROUPS

Taking Responsibility for America's Health

STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE™ 2023 FAQ

What is Standards of Excellence™ (SOE®)?

In 2006, America's Physician Groups' (APG's) Board of Directors created Standards of Excellence™ (SOE®) as an annual, comprehensive survey of coordinated care infrastructure for APG's accountable physician group members.

The following rigorous categories represent the 2023 APG National Standards of Excellence™, with performance in Domains 1-5 scored and to be publicly reported.

Demographics Information—Participating organization type, size, attributable patient populations, and status of involvement in governmental programs or alternative payment models

Domain 1—Population Health Management: Clinical system supports for quality and efficiency on a population scale

Domain 2—Health Information Technology: Funnel for accurate, actionable information to support clinical decisions and coordinate team care

Domain 3—Accountability and Transparency: Response to the public demand for objective information regarding performance, patient service, and regulatory compliance

Domain 4—Patient-Centered Care: Critical components of access, convenience, cultural responsiveness, and customized individual care

Domain 5—Advanced Primary Care: Clear investments in primary care capabilities that promote accessible, high-quality care delivery and that sustain a robust patient-centered medical home model

Domain 6—Administrative and Financial Capability: Operating processes that support management of complex payor and partner relationships, diverse revenue streams, incentive alignment, and service innovations in the context of risk-bearing arrangements. (Informational only with *no* public reporting)

Why SOE®?

This survey serves as a roadmap for physician organizations to learn where their strengths and opportunities lie to provide the highest quality, coordinated, and accountable care. The SOE® survey has been designed and is continuously being enhanced with a shared language and member-identified, member-tested tools and processes. The SOE® survey defines the necessary core competencies for any physician organization to generate great patient outcomes and to thrive in risk-bearing arrangements. There is no other comparable “implementation playbook” analogous to the SOE® for value-based care.

In addition to awarding and celebrating individual organization's capabilities and performance, APG also leverages and telegraphs the aggregate survey data to influence policy and advocacy, as well as educate consumers, policymakers, health plans, and other partners, in driving the shift towards value-based care (see example [white paper on SDOH](#) from 2018 SOE®).

Who participates?

Participation is selectively offered only to APG members and is voluntary. 2023 will be APG's 16th year of the SOE[®] survey. For 2022, while still managing to pandemic-related challenges, 84 of APG's more than 360 medical groups, health systems, ACO and IPA members participated in the assessment. Of these 84 participating organizations—collectively accountable for the care of approximately 17 million managed lives under Commercial, Medicare, and Medicaid coverage—72 achieved the coveted Elite status. These Elite honorees ranged from small IPAs to mid-sized, integrated medical groups to large health systems. Notably, 6 out of 8 of our newest APG members achieved Elite status with their first-time survey participation in 2022.

Who decides content?

Every year, APGs' [Clinical Quality Leadership Forum](#) reviews and enhances questions in each domain to continually improve the survey and to set a higher standard for performance than the year prior. This workgroup of clinicians takes into account rising national care quality and efficiency standards, policy shifts, and the increasing expectations of patients, purchasers, payors, and government agencies.

How long does it take to complete?

The APG SOE[®] survey typically takes ~ 10 hours to complete with C-suite involvement and a cross-disciplinary team of staff from various organizational departments—clinical, operational, and financial.

How are results reported?

Domains 1-5 are scored and publicly reported each year. A subset of APG's member organizations serve as representatives in our Clinical Quality Leadership Forum, which determines the benchmark star thresholds for each domain. Threshold setting occurs during late Spring/Summer each year once survey submission closes.

A participating physician organization is rewarded a star in a domain when its performance scores above the annually adjusted benchmark threshold in that particular domain. Summary results of Domains 1-5 are publicly reported with the consent of participating physician organizations. Groups who achieve a star in each of Domains 1 through 5 will be recognized as an Elite organization at APG's Annual Fall Conference and through a press release. The Star Chart is available for members-only viewing at <http://www.apg.org/soe>.

Here is the overall performance designation in our Star reward system:

- 5 stars = Elite
- 4 stars = Exemplary
- 3 stars = Meritorious
- 2 stars = Admirable
- 1 star = Commendable
- 0 stars = Participant

We collaborate with [PRC](#) as our survey administrator. PRC provides the streamlined, easy-to-use web-interface for our SOE[®] survey as well as reviews, scores, and ensures accurate and consistent reporting on submitted surveys.

When does the survey take place?

This year, the SOE[®] survey **launches on March 16, 2023**, with web platform user training by PRC on March 15. Email notifications of the upcoming training and launch will be sent to all APG members in the weeks prior to the training and launch. **We strongly encourage all APG members to participate. Please contact APG SOE Admin Coordinator, Norma Springsteen, nspringsteen@apg.org to ensure your organization is on the 2023 active survey roster or to register your organization for participation.**

For more information or specific content questions, please visit www.apg.org/soe or contact **APG Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Susan M. Huang, shuang@apg.org**

